

WASHINGTON – The U.S. House of Representatives voted 426-2 in favor of an amendment offered by Congressman Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) today requiring a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) regarding the link between the production and sale of narcotics and the rise of international terrorism. The Kirk Amendment was attached to the 2009 Intelligence Authorization Act (H.R. 5959), which passed the full House today. The NIE would be the first comprehensive intelligence community-wide assessment of the link between drugs and terror. NIEs reflect the consensus view of all US intelligence agencies.

“Heroin and hashish are fueling the resurgence of the Taliban and al Qaeda in Afghanistan,” Congressman Kirk said. “The Taliban has become a fully functioning, South Asian narco-terrorist organization, protecting the source of 92 percent of the world's opium. Production is so high now that the price of heroin is dropping after years of record crops. To compensate, Afghan drug kingpins are expanding into new illicit markets – already becoming the major suppliers of global hashish markets. To wipe out terror, we must attack its income. The Kirk Amendment will ensure that our military and NATO allies have the necessary resources and information to target these emerging international drug and terror cartels.”

Last month, security conditions in Afghanistan worsened. The Taliban set new records for the intensity, scope and frequency of their attacks; the numbers of districts under stress; the number of district centers attacked and the numbers of roadside, car bombs and suicide bombs used.

The 45 NATO fatalities in June, including 27 Americans, represented the highest number killed in a single month in nearly seven years of fighting.

According to open-source reporting on NATO-Taliban firefights, the Taliban never ran out of bodies, ammunition or supplies. NATO ground forces did not win every battle – a new and troubling development.

“With the increasing number of cross-border attacks in Afghanistan that are coming from the Waziristan region of Pakistan, it is more important than ever to develop a complete picture of where al Qaeda and the Taliban terrorists are hiding and, especially, how they are funded,” Congressman Kirk said. “Heroin has financed the resurgence of al Qaeda and the Taliban. Now it combines with hashish and cannabis to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to finance

terror. If the Great Plains are the breadbasket of America, then these Afghan provinces make up the heartland of the international narcotics trade.”